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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Abilene Hustlers 4-H Club members were fortunate they set up the nativity scene in Fike Park when they did, beating Sunday's snowstorm by just a few days. The park accumulated about 3 inches of snow over the weekend. Other areas in Colby saw 4

to 5 inches, and some northwest Kansas towns got as much as 6. The storm blew through Sunday and continued into eastern Kansas this morning.

Sunday storm leaves 6 inches here

By Kevin Bottrell

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Northwest Kansas woke up Sunday morning to blowing snow with a layer already on the ground.

The storm didn't come as much of a surprise. Word went out over Thomas County's emergency communication system about 3:20 p.m. Saturday that a winter storm warning had been issued for a storm coming east from Colorado.

The warning, which proved mostly true, predicted rain turning to snow starting Sunday morning and accumulating to 4 to 8 inches by the evening. The snow started sticking in the morning, but roads stayed clear until temperatures began falling that evening.

Reports from the Community Collabora-

tive Rain, Hail and Snow Network, a volunteer group that records precipitation across the United States, indicate anywhere from 3 to 5 inches in Colby and 5 inches in Levant on Sunday. The National Weather Service reported 6 1/2 inches in Brewster, 5 in Goodland, 4 in Oakley and 2 in St. Francis.

The storm continued east on Monday, hitting eastern Kansas and southeastern Nebraska with a blanket of rain and snow. The National Weather Service is predicting 6 to 8 inches from Manhattan to Hiawatha, 4 to 6 inches around Concordia and Abilene and 1 to 2 inches around Emporia and Garnett. Roads were reported snowpacked and icy throughout that area.

The Kansas and Colorado transportation departments are reporting parts of I-70 and the surrounding roads as partly snow-packed but there were no roads closed. Around

Colby, many roads were covered by a layer of ice early in the morning, but that quickly melted.

The Kansas Highway Patrol has not reported any accidents resulting from the snow in northwest Kansas on Sunday. Two accidents were reported after people got moving this morning, however.

The first was at 7:45 a.m. on Interstate 70 about a mile west of the Levant exit. Sheriff's deputies, state troopers, fire rescue crews, an ambulance and a wrecker were dispatched. The one vehicle involved reportedly left the roadway and rolled onto its top. At least one person was injured.

The other was a two-car accident about 9:10 a.m. in the 600 block of South Range Avenue. No injuries were reported.

Nursing home passes review, will stay open

By Kevin Bottrell

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A Colby nursing home that was put on notice by the Kansas Department of Aging passed a second inspection and will not be closing, officials say.

Colby Care Center passed a second survey and fixed two minor violations that had caused the notice, said Administrator Joyce Halling. The state agency had issued a public notice on Nov. 2 that it was closing the Care Center to Medicare and Medicaid patients because it was not in "substantial compliance" with state and federal regulations. The center had until Nov. 29 to fix the issues, however, and Halling said, a follow-up survey had already been scheduled for last Tuesday.

After acknowledging that the

center had time to correct its deficiencies, the state published a second notice of the closing on Nov. 6. The state later sent out a third public notice on Wednesday, after the center had passed its second survey, but later retracted that notice.

The original survey gave the center a "D" rating, indicating some violation of state and federal regulations, but none that would harm residents. Halling said the two issues involved charting and a toilet schedule for one of the residents.

The second survey, Halling said, lasted only two hours. By the end, Colby Care Center had passed on those two issues and was again in "substantial compliance" with federal and state rules.

If the center had not fixed the

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Candidate to speak at honor society event

Sixteen juniors will be inducted into the Colby chapter of the National Honor Society at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Colby High School Auditorium.

Speaker for the event will be Sue Boldra, a veteran teacher, at Fort Hays State University, and a Republican candidate for the 1st District Congressional seat.

Inductees are Brittany Bange, Amanda Barnum, Andrew Flanagan, Audra Fleming, Kim Gerstner, Grace Hankin, Laura Juenemann, Sam Kendrick, Matt Lambert, Sara Martin, Tera Raymond, Shanell Sager, Austin Scheideman, Kelsey Shields, Ashley Standage and Caitlyn Wark.

Students with an overall grade

average of 3.75 are eligible, but candidates also are judged on leadership, service and character, said Linda Jones, honor society advisor. The National Honor Society faculty council evaluates juniors for membership.

Jones said the evaluation is based on the student's participation in community and school activities. They must contribute 10 hours of community service per semester. Character is measured in terms of integrity, behavior, ethics and cooperation with students and faculty.

Faculty council members are Linda Jones; Roni Dietz, Donna Roberts, Vanessa Eicher, Gordon Rasmussen and Aaron Lamble.

Kansas legislators can't escape debate over drive to raise taxes

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — A debate over raising taxes appears inevitable for Kansas legislators next year because of the state's continuing budget problems.

The conversation appears most likely to focus first on eliminating exemptions to the state's 5.3 percent sales tax, then on rolling back tax breaks legislators granted to businesses in previous years, but it's possible the scope could broaden further.

The Republican-controlled Legislature will convene in January after a year of spending cuts and other adjustments to keep the budget balanced. Democratic Gov. Mark Parkinson is promising to make nearly \$260 million in cuts by the end of this month to prevent a deficit for the fiscal year ending June 30.

However, legislators will have to approve a budget for the next fiscal year, and they're already having to close a projected shortfall for that year, fiscal 2011. Even lawmakers who strongly oppose tax increases — and question whether revenue-raising measures could pass — don't believe the debate can be avoided.

"I think you're going to have to have the discussion," said Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairman Jay Emler, a Lindsborg Republican.

Four previous rounds of cuts and other adjustments this year have left the state with a current (fiscal 2010) budget that includes \$5.6 billion in spending financed with the state's general tax revenues.

But state officials issued a new financial forecast last week that projected state revenues at only \$5.4 billion, prompting Parkinson's fifth round of cuts. Furthermore, the same officials predicted the state's total general revenues would drop to less than \$5.2 billion in the next fiscal year.

Federal stimulus dollars have buffered some of the state's woes, but even with help from Washington, the state faces trimming aid to public schools and reducing spending again in other parts of the budget.

Educators are one obvious potential source of pressure on legislators to raise new tax dollars. Aid to public schools consumes a little more than half the state's general revenues. The state has backed away from commitments it made only three years ago — under pressure from the Kansas Supreme Court —

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Making ready for Santa



HOLLY STEPHENS/Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce

Lottie McLemore of the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce helped get Santa City set up and ready for its Nov. 27 opening. The theme this year will be "The Spirit of Christmas on the Prairie," tying in with Thomas County's 125th Anniversary. Santa City will be open 1 to 5 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday until Dec. 14, when it will also be open week nights.

Briefly

Food bank needs donations

Genesis-Thomas County food bank needs nonperishable items for its Christmas Food Basket project. Drop them off at the office, 350 S. Range, Suite 13, between 10 a.m. and noon and 1 and 4 p.m. Wednesdays, or at Leroy's Printing, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, First Presbyterian Church, Colby United Methodist Church or Trinity Lutheran Church. For information, call the office at 460-7930.

Get your Christmas decorations

The Colby United Methodist Church is having a Christmas decorations flea market from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday in the church fellowship hall. Decorations, greenery and other Christmas items will be available. For information, call the church office at 460-2761.

German heritage at museum

The Prairie Museum of Art and History will sponsor a talk by German language and literature professor William Keel from the University of Kansas at noon Thursday. Keel will speak about German heritage in Kansas as part of the "Food for Thought" lecture series every third Thursday at the museum through March. A light soup lunch will be served. For information, call the museum at 460-4590.

Blood drive Thursday

The American Red Cross will hold a blood drive from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Thursday in the Colby Community College Student Union. To schedule an appointment or for information, call the college Health Sciences department at 460-4797 or the Red Cross at (800) 448-3543.

Study Handel's 'Messiah'

The Colby First Presbyterian Church will hold a four-part Bible study of George Handel's "Messiah" beginning at 5:30 p.m. Thursday at the church and continuing Dec. 3, 10 and 17. The cost will be \$10 for the study book. The study will cover the Biblical passages behind four the choruses in the Advent portion of the "Messiah," said Pastor Carol Rahn. Call the church office at 462-6342 by next Monday to sign up.

Alliance to offer holiday service

The Thomas County Ministerial Alliance will sponsor a Community Thanksgiving Service at 6 p.m. Sunday in the Frahm Theater at Colby Community College. Ministers and musicians from area churches will team up for the event. Donations will

be accepted to help with programs the alliance operates throughout the year. For information, call Jarrod Spencer at 443-2403.

Methodist youth cooking turkey

The Colby United Methodist Church's Senior High Youth Group will hold a Thanksgiving dinner from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday at the church. Donations will be used for the church's missions and ministries. For information, call Lisa Wilson at 460-2567.

